

CONNECTIONS

WEA-SAMMAMISH
UNISERV COUNCIL

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: 2008 REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY SPOKANE ~ MAY 14-16

The RA, as seasoned association members call it, is the largest democratic decision-making body in the state. It is once again in Spokane after two years on the west side in Tacoma. Governor Christine Gregoire will be speaking on Thursday evening to kick off the RA.

Each year, as I attend the RA, I am again impressed with the feeling of purpose in the room. Approximately 1,200 members are elected in local associations to make decisions for the 77,000+ members of the Washington Education Association. These decisions are not made lightly—members debate and discuss the merits of:

- new business Items (action that must occur in the future)
- resolutions (resolutions statements of what we believe)
- constitutional amendments (amendments to our guiding documents)
- bylaws additions and amendments (documents explaining how we do our business).

Any elected member can present an item to be discussed, and also can debate the various topics. After all the discussion is completed, each

item is voted on, and these items truly guide the direction of the WEA.

On Saturday morning there is a Washington Education Association Political Action Committee (WEA-PAC) meeting. Only WEA-PAC members may attend this meeting, where members make decisions about the endorsement process, hear political speakers, and generally determine the direction of WEA-PAC.

The commitment of our elected representatives also impresses me. The days are long and tedious. We begin at 7:30 p.m. Thursday and go for three hours. On Friday and Saturday, we begin at 7 a.m. with caucus meetings. Our representatives have the opportunity to discuss the various items of business with others from the WEA-Sammamish UniServ Council to form united opinions with those from our council. On Saturday night, representatives must stay until the business is complete – and I do not exaggerate when I say that this can be a late night! I have been involved in RAs that didn't end until 2 a.m.!



ART GALLOWAY
COUNCIL PRESIDENT

CLAIM YOUR CASH

The Washington State Department of Revenue has set up a website to allow people to find out if there is unclaimed money or property waiting for them. The website is www.claimyourcash.org. Take a few minutes and check to see if there is money just waiting for you to claim!



OUR COUNCIL IN ACTION



Take the lead.

Restoring Washington's Commitment to Great Public Schools

By now you probably know that even though our state constitution has the strongest language in the country for meeting the needs of public education, we also know that the state is not adequately funding our schools.

The Network for Excellence in Washington Schools (NEWS) lawsuit is one strategy WEA is involved with to achieve an ample and sustainable funding source. The WEA and 15 school districts and their respective local associations, as well as eight pro-public education organizations, have banded together in a coalition that is suing the state for failing to meet its paramount duty. The lawsuit is set to be heard in March 2009.

WEA's *Take the lead* program is seeking other school districts to join as partners in this lawsuit. Our goal is to have at least one school district in every legislative district across the state. Here at WEA-Sammamish, Bellevue EA and the Bellevue School District have signed on so far. The Tahoma EA is talking with their school board and superintendent about joining the lawsuit. We are in search of additional community organizations as well.

Eddie Henderson (BEA) and Anne Melgaard (SEA) joined John Schuster (TEA) and WEA-Sammamish staff for a *Take the lead* cadre meeting to decide our council's next steps with *Take the lead*. We are making plans for membership training to reach out into our communities to make a sustainable funding source for public education possible.

A LIVING WAGE IS PART OF TAKING THE LEAD -- LWESP members have received invitations to attend Listening Sessions during the month of May, regarding the Living Wage Campaign in preparation for their contract negotiations next year.

If you see someone wearing a button that says "got average?" please ask them about it! And, if you'd like to be a part of the conversation about why being "below average" is not good enough for our students, including the pay for all the people who are involved with making the education of Washington students "above average," ask your local leaders if you can also have a button. ~ *Lora Hein*



BARGAINING HEATS UP

Bellevue EA, Lake Washington EA, and Snoqualmie EA are at the bargaining table. There are a number of key issues that each local is working to make improvements on, including compensation, insurance, and workload relief.

Keep alert to your association newsletter regarding bargaining updates so you can stay aware and be a part of what is happening with negotiations in your local. ~ *Clarence Gunn*

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Upcoming Events

Sammamish Unified Bargaining & Presidents Meeting	5/5
Mock Rep Assembly	5/5
WEA Rep Assembly in Spokane	5/15-5/17
Memorial Day—office closed	5/26

WEA-SAMMAMISH

10628 NE 37th Circle Kirkland, WA 98033
 Phone 425-822-9898 or 1-888-476-4226

www.weasam.org

Executive Board

President—Art Galloway Vice President—Neva Luke
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